1893/1920s Séance Diary
William A. Flick, Dayton Virginia

This handwritten diary was written by William A. Flick from Dayton, Virginia. The first entries not included here are from 1893—the year of the diary's purchase—when Flick was a travelling pastor and music instructor employed by Dayton's Ruebush-Kieffer Music Co. The later entries copied here were produced after his wife died in 1920, and he became an enthusiastic participant of séances, most notably during the Masonic Temple residency of the famous medium Elizabeth Allen Tomson. Some entries include:

"Some interesting phenomena in connection with the passing on of Mrs. Emma Phalen Flick, most devoted wife of Dr. William A. Flick. She left the earth plane at 4:30 AM July 4, 1920 while a patient sat George Baptist Hospital, Atlanta, GA… My first knowledge of her presence after leaving here was experienced at a private séance in a private home in Atlanta in August 1920."

"She gave me the message that she was happy and that she had seen Nan her half sister who had passed away before her. She apparently tried to get in touch with me during my sleeping and waking hours while I was living at 99 Cleburne Atlanta several months later she presented me the picture hope her favorite painting. This presentation was in a dream but further phenomena was experienced upon my waking…"

"Another beautiful dream was experienced about Xmas 1921 while living 241 Quarters US Public Health Service Hospital #76 Maywood, Illinois. The dream was concerning the birth of her baby. The next most interesting phenomena occurred on Feb 26th 1922 on the 17th floor of the Masonic Temple which was being used by the International Psychical Research Society. Elizabeth Allen Tomson being presented I was called to the platform facing the cabinet in which Mrs. Tomson sat.   Dr. Ray escorted me to this cabinet and asked me whom I wanted to see and I told him I wanted to see my wife. Just then the curtain of the cabinet was opened and there was the beautiful figure of Mrs. Flick who was dressed in a beautiful silky material. Then she put her arms about my neck and kissed me on my lips…"

"On Thursday evening March 2, 1922 we the society met in room 209 Masonic Temple and Mrs. Flick materialized and presented herself three times and this time she called me by the name she always addressed me Billy. She took a carnation a pink one her favorite flower…"

"On Friday March 3, 1922 I was invited and attended another séance at the home of Mrs. Crawford President St Wheaton, Illinois, Dr. and Mrs. Tomson and daughter were there. Mrs. Flick materialized called for me and missed me again."

"The most unusual phenomena was demonstrated on March 5, 1922 this was the regular Sunday night program. There were quite a number of materializations while all lights were turned out except tow on either side of the hall…Dr. Ray escorted e from the front row of seats to the platform, just as I appeared in front of the cabinet Mrs. Flick materialized opened the curtain and posed with me for a picture that was made with Eastman Kodak with a flash light. Mrs. Flick stood to my left and she held out her right hand as though she wanted me to take it…. Mrs. Flick appeared rather impatient to wait so long and apparently wanted to leave but I told her to wait that everything would be all right…"

"After the program I rode from Chicago to Forest Park and Mrs. Tomson the psychic she told me some interesting things about her life and her father Maj. Gen Shooks her guide or councilor…"

"Had an interesting séance 7 in circle. I saw and talked to Mrs. Flick also Dr. Ballard and others"

Diary images in this document are courtesy of Monica Case of Rush Hawkins Books. Images from the Tomsons' Chicago exhibitions are courtesy Brandon Hodge, mysteriousplanchette.com. Tomson's business card is courtesy of Calvin von Crush. Assorted articles are also included.

Excelsior Diary

Some interesting phenomena in connection with the passing on of Mrs. Emma Beales Phalen Flick (most devoted wife of Dr. Wm. A. Flick) She left the Earth Plane at 4:30 A.M. July 4, 1920 while a patient at Ga. Baptist Hosp. Atlanta, Ga. (Drs. in attendance: Matthew, Bartholomew and Dorsey) Above couple were married in Century Methodist Church, St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, on Oct. 29, 1919. at 5 P.M.

My first knowledge of her presence after leaving me was experienced at a seance in a private

home in Atlanta on the last night of August 1920. She gave me the message that she was happy and that she had seen "Nan" her half-sister who had passed on before her.

She apparently tried to get in touch with me during my sleeping and waking hours while I was living at 99 Cleburne Ave. Atlanta, Ga several months later she presented me the picture "Hope" her favorite painting. This presentation was in a dream but further phenomena were experienced upon my waking.

Another beautiful

dream was experienced about X-mas 1921 while living in 241 G. quarters U.S. Public Health Service Hosp. #76, Maywood, Ill. The dream was concerning the birth of her baby (our baby).

The next most interesting phenomena occured on Feb. 26, 1922 on the 17th floor of the Masonic Temple, in the hall which was being used by the International Psychical Research Society, Elizabeth Allen Tomson being presented, Chicago, Ill.

I was called to the platform facing the cabinet in which Mrs Tomson sat. Dr. Ray escorted me

to this cabinet and asked me whom I wanted to see and I told him I wanted to see my wife. Just then the curtain of the cabinet was opened and there was the beautiful figure of Mrs Flick who was draped in a beautiful silky material. I said to her: "Is this Emma Beals"? she said: "Yes". Then she put her arms about my neck and kissed me on my lips. I immediately turned to leave the platform and she started to follow me and Dr. Rae called me back. She kissed me again. Several hundred people present.

On Thursday evening March 2, 1922 we the society met in room 209 Masonic Temple and Mrs Flick materialized and presented herself three times and this time she called me by the name she always addressed me, "Billy." She took a carnation a pink one, her favorite flower, from a vase sitting near the cabinet and presented it to me. I was called up to the cabinet the second time and she went back into the cabinet just as I started to go toward it. Then when I reached the cabinet I said: "Is Emma Beals here?" "I would like to

speak to her." A very course voice in a military tone said: "Look at her squarely in the face and see if you recognize her." This voice is supposed to be that of Mrs. ~~Thompson~~ Tomson's father who is her counsellor at all seances. He was a Major-general during the Civil war and was a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln. Just as he stated the above to me, the curtain opened and Mrs. Flick materialized again apparently garbed as a nurse. She kissed me for the third time the same

evening. I asked her if she was happy, she said: "Certainly I am".

The carnation mentioned was brought to my room, 408. 5th Ave, Maywood, Ill. and placed in a vase in water and kept fairly fresh until March 7, 1922. Tuesday morning.

On Friday, March 3, 1922. I was invited and attended another seance at the home of Mrs Comeford Presidents St, Wheaton, Ill. Dr. & Mrs Tomson & daughter were there. Mrs. Flick materialized, called for me and kissed me again.

The most unusual phenomenum was demonstrated on March 5, 1922 in the hall 17th floor of the Masonic Temple. This was the regular Sunday night program. There were quite a number of mater-ializations while all lights were turned out except two on either side of the hall. After all had left the platform Dr. Ray escorted me from the front row of seats to the plat-form. Just as I appeared in front of the cabinet Mrs Flick materialized opened the curtains

and posed with me for a picture that was made with Eastman Kodak with a flash light. Mrs. Flick stood to my left and she held out her right hand as thought she wanted ~~to take~~ me to take it. It seemed as though we stood there several min-utes as it seemed to require an un-usual long time to adjust the Kodak Mrs. Flick appear-ed rather impat-ient to wait so long and apparent-ly wanted to leave but I told her to wait that every-thing would be all right very soon.

I was saying to her how I regretted that we had never had a picture made together before and now I was so glad that we had an opportunity to have one one made together to which she said, "Yes." I could see her fingers and right hand and it looked perfectly normal. People in the audience saw her after the light was flashed and the camera snapped but I was blinded by the light and did not see her go back into the cabinet. This was the first

time that she did not kiss me but she was practically in the usual pose for a picture and appeared very much pleased that we were going to have a picture made for the first time together.

Attended seance at 209 Masonic Temple March 9, 1922. Mrs Flick materialized and appeared twice. She came out of the cabinet and I recognized her without being called and went up to her. She reached out and took a beautiful rose and a fern from a vase sitting near the cabinet and handed it to me

then kissed me.
She called me "Billy".
On Sunday night
March 12, 1922 she
materialized and
appeared about three
times. I asked her
if she still loved
me and she nodded
"yes". She hugged and
kissed me several
times. She was drap-
ped beautifully in
a silky white
material and I
could feel it as
I removed a part
of it from her arm
so she could
kiss me. Her lips
were warm and
felt quite normal.
She came out and
posed for a picture
and called for me
to stand with
her. in fact the

Major stated that
she wanted me to
stand with her, but
before I could get
to the platform the
light was flashed
for the picture by
mistake. During
the seance, beautiful
flowers were mater-
ialized in a vase
behind curtain of
cabinet though the
electric lights were
left on. A Chicago
judge made the ex-
amination of them, etc.
Sunday night
March 19, 1922 Mrs.
Blick materialized
and appeared about
four times. twice that
she appeared as I
thought and she called
to me "Billy" as I
was sitting on front

row. I thought she was the first one to appear when she called my name. Later I was called to cabinet and she kissed me but had difficulty in removing the veil which was hanging from her forhead. She took her left hand and made several attemps to push the vail back over her head. She went back into the cabinet. then I left the platform for my seat and she came out and followed me to the edge of the platform and kissed me again. I could feel her breath as she kissed me and

also the warmth of her lips. I said to her:- "Don't forget next Sunday night we are going to have our picture taken". she seemed to be much elated over the suggestion as was indicated by her nimble and graceful bow as she retired into the cabinet thus completing the materialization.

Sunday night March 26th 1922. Mrs. F fullfilled her engagement to me and before she appeared outside the cabinet she sent me a flower which resembled an oxi daisy but it had lavender pettals and a yellow centre. We posed for another picture and a fairly suc-

cessful one was
taken by Mr. Geo. Clark
She spoke to me.
(On both occasions
3/2/22 & 3/9/22 when
she presented me c̄
carnation & rose, "My
Wild Irish Rose", was
being played)
Mrs. F. had placed
her left hand in
my left hand before
the picture was taken
but soon removed
as picture indicates.
On March 29, 1922
Mr. Geo. Clark took
me to a Trumpet Circle
at 2203 West Grand Ave.
Chicago. Mrs. Florence
Werner, medium.
Mrs. Flick materialized
and carried on an
extended conversation
c̄ me. Dr. Ballard an
English physician who

had been in the spirit
world 73 years talked
a long time on some
very scientific subjects
Emma seemed delight-
ed to see & talk c̄ me
and asked me to return
the next Wed. night.
There were many mater-
ializations and many
conversation during the
evening. Several Indian
Guides, - Big Horn.
Running Bear
Attended meeting of
Psychic society in
Masonic Temple April
9th 1922 Mrs. Flick did
not appear but a car-
nation was sent to me
There was transporta-
tion of matter (flowers)
in open cabinet.
Wednesday April 12,
1922. Attended Trump-
et Circle, Mrs Werner
medium.

Talked c̄ & saw Mrs. Flick and she told me about the development of Billy Jr. and how a mighty company he was to her etc. A very interesting meeting. Did not attend the next Sunday meeting Easter April 16, 1922 went to Waukesha, Wis.

Attended Trumpet circle Wed. April 19, 1922. Mrs. Flick materialized and had a long conversation c̄ her. Billy Jr. materialized.

Sunday April 23, 1922. Formation of flowers in open cabinet. Mrs. Flick materialized and kissed me twice on lips. Her lips were warm & moist, her breath

[illegible]

was warm and I could detect the heat from her body. She told me that Billy Jr. was there but he did not materialize.

After the program I rode from Chicago to Forest Park c̄ Mrs. Tomson the psychic. She told me some interesting things about her life and her father (foster) Maj-Gen Brooks her guide or councellor.

Wed. April 26, 1922 attended Trumpet circle Grand Ave. Mrs. Flick materialized & talked c̄ me.

{ Saw Grand Ma. & Grand Pa materialize & talked c̄ them on April 12, 1922 then Grand Ma Berry again Wed. April 19, 1922

(Did not attend Sun. 4/30/22)

May 3, 1922 Attended Trumpet circle at Mrs. Werner's.
Miss Childers (nurse) from 76 went with me Saw & talked c̄ Mrs. Fleck. Grandma Berg also appeared and I talked c̄ her. Many came and talked to their friends.
Sunday May 7. 1922. Attended at Corinthian Hall. Masonic Temple. Miss Childers was with me. Mrs. Fleck was the 2nd one to appear or materialize. She was beautifully gowned, came out to edge of platform and her feet and toes were very plainly seen in fact her foot

extended out over the edge of platform. Miss Tomson took me to stage and Mrs Fleck turned completely around having her back to me. She went into cabinet and I talked to her. Said she had been at Mrs Werner's on Wednesday night before. I introduced her to Miss Tomson as Miss T. wanted to meet her. She came out embraced and kissed me twice. Her lips were warm and moist and I could detect her warm breath.
Flowers were formed or transported into the cabinet.
I had made a date to meet Mrs. Fleck on this Sunday night

from the previous Wednesday night at Mrs. Werner's. Dr. John Lloyd whom I met delivered the address.

Wednesday May 10, 1922 Attended meeting at Mrs. Werner's. Mrs. Flick appeared and talked c̄ me.

Sprained my ankle on above date and Dr. Ballard discussed my case on following Wed. May 17 and stated that there was a small fracture of a bone and that I should be kept in hospital for some time. This message was phoned to me by Mr. Geo. E. Clarke of 11 South La Salle St. Phone Dearborn 4527.

(Friday) Thursday at mother Trumpet circle Mrs. — Mr. Clarke talked c̄ Mrs Flick, she talked thru trumpet and said he was getting along as well as could be expected. She draped a flower by him which he had asked her for. He did not see her him self but others in the circle did and said they saw Billy Jr. with her.

July 26, 1922 at Mrs. Herners 2203 West Grand ave. Had an interesting seance, 7 in circle. I saw and talked c̄ Mrs. Flick. also Dr. Ballard and others.

July 27, 1922 at 11 A.M. Talked c̄ Mrs. Flick over the telephone thru Mrs. Herner from her residence to my office on A-4 Speedway Hospital. Her voice was a little different to hear but sounded natural. She spoke about our conversation the night before and how nice it was for us to communicate by telephone. Said she was there at 10 o'clock but there was so much noise over phone so I called at 11 o'clock. She spoke

under shawl which
Mrs Farmer threw
over her in order to
increase the voice.
She said it was
too hot to stay under
it so long.



WATCH YOUR CREDIT
CH 1729

INTERNATIONAL CHICAGO
12/11/22

GHOST WOMAN AND HUSBAND ARRESTED IN CHICAGO

PHOTO IS OF MRS . ELIZABETH THOMSON AND HER HUSBAND CLARENCE TOMSON , WHO WERE ARRESTED IN THE MIDST OF A SPIRITUALISTIC SÉANCE AT THE M MASONIC TEMPLE IN CHICAGO LAST NIGHT . MRS. THOMSON CLAIMS TO BE THE WORLDS GREATEST PSYCHO-ANALYST AND AN ASSOCIATE OF SIR OLIVER LODGE AND SIR A . CONAN DOYLE . THEY WERE ARRESTED WHILE A HOUSE OF 100 WITH A "GATE" CHARGE OF $1 . 00 EACH WAITED TO "SEE THE GHOST WALK" . NOTE CHICAGO HERALD AND EXAMINER OF DECEMBER 11th. CARRIES STORY. SENT TO ALL BUREAUS.


SAME

Left to Right

Miss Anne ~~Tomson~~ Tomson

(madame) Mrs Elizabeth Tomson

Mr. Clarence Tomson

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1920

PHONE MAYWOOD 1849

ELIZABETH ALLEN TOMSON

SEANCES WEDNESDAY AND SAT. NIGHTS

8 O.CLOCK

THURSDAY AFTERNOONS

AT 2 O.CLOCK

TRUMPET READINGS

BY APPOINTMENT

MADISON CARS TO OAK ST.

201 S. 21 AVE. COR OAK ST.

MAYWOOD ILL

Expects the Spirits to Solve a Murder Mystery

CHICAGO.—"I shall solve the mystery of the murder of Mrs. Louise C. Browne within 30 days." This statement was made by Mrs. Elizabeth Tomson, a spiritualist and childhood friend of the widow, whose murder in the bungalow at Maywood remains unsolved after weeks of fruitless investigation.



In order that she may have first-hand impressions, Mrs. Tomson and her family will move into the bungalow. The family consists of Mrs. Tomson, her husband, C. H. Tomson, and their daughter, Miss Halma.

Within a week after they have moved in the Tomsons will hold a seance in the bungalow. The chief of police of Maywood, the police who have been working on the case, the coroner's physicians and the reporters who have covered the case will be invited to attend.

"I do not promise to catch the murderer," said Mrs. Tomson, "but I am positive that before I have lived 30 days in this house I shall see, in every detail, exactly how the crime was committed, and I shall have an excellent description of the murderer, and, possibly, the name."

The Tomsons have been in London. They arrived in Chicago recently and last Monday Mrs. Tomson heard of the murder of Mrs. Browne, and when she recognized in the slain woman a former schoolmate she determined to make the effort to solve the mystery by exercise of her spiritualistic faculties.

"In England it is quite common to ask spiritualists to help in [illegible] cases," Mrs. Tomson said. "In many cases they have [illegible] and in innumerable instances they have been [illegible] aid to the police."

Mrs. Elizabeth Tomson Cannot Make Spirits Move In New York

New York, Today.—Law libraries and ghosts don't mix, and therefore Mrs. Elizabeth A. Tomson, Chicago psychic who came here to try for the $2,500 prize offered by the scientific American for genuine phenomena will not disturb the spirits of the dead.

Mrs. Tomson, who has been producing whole regiments of the ghosts out of cabinets at private homes here, sent her husband, Dr. Allen Tomson to look at the office picked out for the seance.

"It will never do," declared the doctor as soon as he saw the library, ·ecked high with volumes of Blackstone, "there is no privacy."

J Malcom bird, of the committee from the magazine, was unable nounced that Mrs. Tomson's seance to patch up the difficulty and anwas "all off."

An Italian youth is scheduled to try for the prize early next month.

Bites Ghost Of Grandma, Medium Mad

Skeptical Youth Declares Ectoplasn Tastes Like Cheese Cloth

NEW YORK, Nov. 10.—Mrs. Elizabeth Tomson, a "madium" from Chicago, who came here to try for a prize for the person who could produce real "spirits" without any faking, prepared to leave town. Her husband and daughter will go with her.

They will try no more seances in New York parts, it was believed, because at a private demonstration Friday a young man bit the "ghost" of his grandmother.

The "ghost" jumped and yelled.

The young man said the "ectoplasm" (that mysterious substance of which ghosts are supposed to be composed), tasted like cheese cloth.

The seance was over.

Flashlight Causes Trouble at Seance; 'Ghost' Gets Rough

Chicago, July 25.—(INS)—Joseph A. Olshan is recovering here today from wounds received when a "ghost" attacked him. Olshan attended a spiritualistic meeting with 200 other persons. The medium turned down the lights and stated he would produce a ghost.

Olshan snapped on his flashlight and Mrs. Elizabeth Tomson, wife of the medium, rose from her "ghostly" robes and attacked him, he declared. A near riot ensued. Olshan produced warrants for the couple today.